

36752/A
CHOLERA MORBUS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

CHOLERA,

BY

A MEDICAL OFFICER OF THE BRITISH
ARMY,

OF MANY YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN THE TREATMENT OF CHOLERA
IN THE EAST INDIES.

Designed chiefly for the use of Non-Professional Readers.

EDINBURGH:

BELL & BRADFUTE, 12. BANK STREET,
AND JAMES DUNCAN, LONDON.

JULY 1831.

Price One Shilling.

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MILLAR, Archibald

of W. Scot. Report on the epidemic
cholera. 1824. pp 99-100

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T A B L E S.

MEN taken ill of Cholera daily as under, from a Regiment consisting of Eight Hundred Men, at the time stationed in the East Indies.

	Admitted into Hospital.	Died.
1818.		
August 18,	3	1
19,	9	2
20,	15	2
21,	10	2
22,	9	0
23,	11	3
24,	29	6
25,	26	3
26,	19	6
27,	10	5
28,	10	3
29,	9	3
30,	3	0
31,	3	1
September 1,	4	1
2,	8	3
3,	6	2
4,	4	0
5,	6	1
6,	0	0
7,	5	0

TABLE continuèd.

	Admitted into Hospital.	Died.
1818.		
September 8,	0	0
9,	2	0
10,	0	1
11,	1	1
12,	1	0
13,	3	2
14,	8	0
15,	1	0
16,	0	0
17,	0	0
18,	1	0
19,	0	1
20,	0	0
21,	2	1
22,	0	1
23,	0	0
24,	0	0
25,	0	0
26,	2	0
27,	0	1
28,	0	0
29,	1	0
30,	0	0

OBSERVATIONS

ON

CHOLERA.

IN the year 1817, the Cholera broke out in the Army in Bengal, under the personal command of the late Lord Hastings, during the Mahratta and Pindarrie War; and after making great havoc in this Army, the disease gradually spread itself over the vast continent of India. Persia also was visited by this disease, and most of the other countries of the East.

The disease did not reach the force employed in the southern Mahratta country, (under the com-

mand of the late Major-General Sir Thomas Munro, afterwards commanded by Major-General Sir Theophilus Pritzler,) till the month of August 1818. We heard from time to time of the approach of this formidable disease, with as much regularity as if it had been the approach of an invading army, proceeding from town to town, and from village to village, till at last, on the 18th day of August 1818, it entered our camp, attacked and killed a sergeant. Two other men were also seized the same day, but recovered. From the 18th to the 31st August, both days inclusive, the number admitted into Hospital with Cholera was one hundred and sixty-six. Out of this number thirty-seven died ; all the others were cured, and returned to their duty.

The succeeding month, September, from the 1st to the 30th, both days inclusive, fifty-five men were admitted into Hospital with Cholera ; fifteen of whom died : all the others were restored to health, and returned to their duty.

The next month, October, the disease had passed

onward to other places ; only one man having died of this disease, from five admitted during the month.

The strength of the Regiment placed under my immediate charge in August 1818 was eight hundred. From the above, it will appear, that during the prevalence of the Epidemic, from the 18th August to the end of October, the total number attacked by the disease was two hundred and twenty-six, of whom fifty-three died, and one hundred and seventy-three recovered, and returned to their duty.

The annexed tables will show the daily number of those who were attacked by the disease in August and September ; also the casualties as they occurred. I may here remark, that during the prevalence of the disease, the men were living in the open field, under tents, the atmosphere and ground being constantly saturated with moisture, from the almost constant rain that fell during the Monsoon. This Epidemic again attacked the force with which I served in the month of April 1819, during the hot winds, when the ground and atmosphere were perfectly dry,

and the temperature high. The thermometer at mid-day in the tent stood at one hundred and upwards; whereas, during the former attack in August, during the Monsoon, the thermometer seldom rose above seventy. From the 14th to the 26th, both days inclusive, of April, sixty men of my regiment were taken ill with the Cholera, eight of whom died. The remaining fifty-two were restored to health, and returned to their duty.

It is consolatory to remark, that during the prevalence of this Epidemic in its first attack, only two hundred and twenty-six from eight hundred were attacked by the disease. I may remark, that during its prevalence, the officers complained of being unwell; and so far as my observation extended, it appeared to me, that all were less or more affected with an indefinable sensation, suspected to arise from some deleterious property in the atmosphere.

It would be idle to say any thing respecting the cause of this formidable disease, it being hid in total darkness.

The symptoms are, 1st, sickness at stomach, inclination to vomit, frequent copious watery stools, (as if the patient had taken a dose of salts,) followed by spasms, at first chiefly in the extremities, afterwards extending over the body, (with great distress,) attended by urgent and unquenchable thirst, pulse gradually sinking, with great prostration of strength, countenance haggard, skin becoming purple, eyes sunk, and death terminating the scene.

In the treatment of this disease, the only chance of success depends on the early application of powerful remedies. The most distressing symptom is the spasmodic (cramps) affection of the muscles. This is only to be combated by blood-letting in the early stage of the disease. This operation should be conducted so as to induce fainting ; for the moment that syncope takes place, the spasms, however violent and distressing, instantly give way. In the advanced stage of the disease blood cannot be obtained in any considerable quantity, and little or no benefit can be derived from the operation in this advanced period.

Calomel and Laudanum should be given in large doses at the commencement. The patients in India (often robust men) took, on admission into Hospital, twenty grains of Calomel, with a strong dose of Laudanum, and were bled to fainting. Under this treatment they generally fell into a sound sleep, and awoke free from complaint. But when the disease had been of longer standing, the stomach often rejected the medicine, which was obliged to be repeated.

The Calomel should be put on the tongue, mixed with a little sugar, and swallowed dry. The tincture of opium should be given with a few drops of water, only to prevent its being rejected by the stomach ; because, in this disease, the stomach rejects instantly whatever liquid may be swallowed, bringing with it the medicine previously given, and thus defeating the object in view.

To abate as much as possible the unquenchable thirst, the patient should be allowed to keep con-

stantly in his mouth a slice of lime, to be renewed from time to time.

A careful person should be placed near the sick, to prevent them from swallowing any liquid. The thirst in this disease being of the most urgent and desperate description, no words are of any avail in preventing the sick from swallowing any liquid within their reach. In every case, a large blister should be applied over the stomach.

Having had this awful disease in my own person, I can speak from experience and personal feeling ; and it appears to me, that Calomel is the medicine which produces the desired change in the functions of the liver. That organ in this disease secretes no bile. When this medicine begins to act, and bile appears in the evacuations, the patient is then safe, but not till then.

The Opium affords relief by retarding the progress of the disease, and giving the Calomel time to act on the liver. All, all in this terrible disease depends

on the prompt and early application of the remedies : every moment is precious : little good can be expected when the disease has been neglected at its commencement.

Great care is required in selecting the medicine ; in being particular respecting the Laudanum, that it be properly prepared, and of the proper strength. The disease often attacks suddenly and unexpectedly, and not unfrequently in the dead hour of night. It would therefore be desirable, should the disease reach this country, that families be provided with proper medicine, to be taken on the spur of the moment, till assistance can be procured.

The Cholera is generally most severe in its first onset, as will appear from the table for August annexed. When this is the case, the most powerful and robust are attacked, in common with the feeble and relaxed. However, when the strength of the Epidemic begins to fail, as will be seen from the table for September, it usually attacks persons after a de-

bauch, or being exposed to the damp night air, without refreshing sleep.

I have often remarked, on the line of march in the Burmese country, (where the disease prevailed during the late war,) when the men were perspiring freely, and the troops had occasion to cross rivers, that we were almost certain of some cases of Cholera ; and, in general, men seized under those circumstances died in five or six hours.

Some of these men informed me, that they were quite well before coming to the water ; but that after their feet and legs were immersed in the cold stream, when their bodies were covered with sweat, they were taken ill with the usual symptoms of Cholera.

In the above observations, I have carefully avoided taking notice of what has been said or done by others, thinking it better to submit to the non-professional reader an outline of the symptoms, also the mode of treatment adopted by myself in the cure of this disease. Any person, from observing what has

happened to eight hundred men, as stated in the above observations, the number attacked, the number that escaped, and the number that died, will be able to calculate what is likely to happen to any given population subjected to the same Epidemic under similar circumstances.

THE END.

